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# The Filioque in the Phanar: A Public Declaration of Heresy?

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The press office from the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania announced that a former member of their jurisdiction, who left and later emigrated to the United States joining the jurisdiction of the Metropolia's (OCA) Romanian Episcopate, Fr. Theophan (Arjan) Koja, was recently selected by the Heresiarch Archbishop of the Greek Archdiocese, Elpidophoros, to be elevated to the episcopacy. The Holy Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church in a statement concerning this individual wrote on their official website:

Archimandrite Theophan (Arjan) Koja, known to the Orthodox of Albania as a leader of divisive actions, was born in Tirana in 1966. He attended for a while the seminary in Durrës and then went to Romania, where he was ordained a deacon and later a priest. Returning to the country, at the head of a group of ultra-nationalists, on October 8th, 1995, he expelled the celebrants of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy from the Holy Church of the Panagia in the Castle, in the old town of Elbasan. There he installed Nikolla Marku, “ordained” by a schismatic Bishop of the Church of Skopje, under the name “Independent National Albanian Orthodox Church of Saint Maria Elbasan” (Kisha Ortodokse e pavarur Kombetare shqiptare Shen Maria Elbasan). (For an account of this painful divisive action see the journal Ngjallja – November 1995).

Thereafter, his accomplice Nikolla Marku, has not ceased publicly calling the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania as Greek. Using purely nationalist and political terminology, Nikolla Marku continues to occupy the historic Orthodox Church of Elbasan to this day. (See more than 15 related responses in the Ngjallja journal e.g. November 2015, February 2016, April 2016, November 2018).

After his failure, Archimandrite Theophan settled in the USA, where he joined the Romanian Church. He never sought forgiveness for his disruptive actions in the early years of the restoration of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania. Three years ago, he moved to Boston and sought to become Bishop in succession to Metropolitan Nikon (Liolin). However, the leadership of the O.C.A. avoided his election, when they received reliable information of his subversive actions.

Recently he sought to join the Greek Orthodox Church of America. Archbishop Elpidophoros promised him elevation to the Episcopate, and with a rapid procedure, according to the official press release, he was elected Bishop of Philomelion “serving the pastoral needs of the Albanian Orthodox Diocese under the jurisdiction of the Mother Church of Constantinople”.

Surprise and bewilderment are widespread among the Orthodox of Albania regarding this unexpected development due to the insistence of the Archbishop of America, Elpidophoros. We confine ourselves to the necessary reminder of the divisive problems provoked by Archimandrite Theophan during the reconstruction from the ruins of the longsuffering Church of Albania.

Tirana July 5, 2023

From the Secretariat of the Holy Synod [1].

However, we all know that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOARCH) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in general, has a long history of recycling canonically defrocked clergymen and those pseudo-clergymen produced by them, such as the layman Serhii Petrovych Dumenko, also known as "Metropolitan" Epiphanius of the heretical sect of the "Orthodox Church of Ukraine" (OCU), and the now layman Mr. Alexander Belya, who was canonically defrocked by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia or bringing in dubious others into their folds. According to another announcement by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania which can be found on their Albanian language home page the Phanar, in cooperation with the Heresiarch of America, Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis), during this liturgy included the synodically condemned *filioque* clause in their recitation of the Nicene Creed.



The Ecumenical Heresiarch Bartholomew & the Layman, Mr Serhii Petrovych Dumenko, playing dress up as an Orthodox Hierarch

According to the official website of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania, this new hierarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in his public confession of the Nicene Creed has included the heretical *filioque* clause, presumably with the approval of, or in conjunction with both Bartholomew and Elpidophoros. The statement from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod states:

The saboteur of the unity of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania is rewarded in an unprecedented manner. The one who is unfit to lead an Orthodox flock is approved in an unprecedented manner. At the decisive moment of his episcopal ordination, during the Liturgy presided over by the Archbishop of America, *Mr. Elpidophoros*, on July 25, 2023, Theofan Koja proclaimed the Symbol of Faith along with the *Filioque*.

From the press office of the Holy Synod [2].



Now, with all of the heretical activities that have been produced by both Bartholomew and Elpidophoros in the last few years, we have to wonder if they too were reciting the *filioque* heresy while saying the Nicene Creed as well. Unfortunately, the Synodal website of the Church in Albania does not give us this detail but knowing the track record of these two it would not come as a surprise to anyone. We know the 8th Ecumenical Council, under Saint Photios the Great condemned the *filioque*, but regardless nothing is going to stop these two arch-heresiarchs from accomplishing their false union with the Latin Papists in 2025.



Archbishop Elpidophoros of GOARCH with Fr. Theophan  
(Koja)

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## *References*

[1]. "Fr. Theophan (Arjan) Koja was elected Auxiliary Bishop for Albanians in the USA!" Official Website of the Orthodox Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, accessed July 27th, 2023, <https://orthodoxalbania.org/2020/en/2023/07/05/fr-theophan-arjan-koja-was-elected-auxiliary-bishop-for-albanians-in-the-usa/>

[2], "Njoftim – Shpërblehet në mënyrë të pashembullt sabotuesi i unitetit të Kishës Orthodhokse Autoqefale të Shqipërisë," Faqja Zyrtare e Kishës Orthodhokse Autoqefale të Shqipërisë, accessed July 27th, 2023, <https://orthodoxalbania.org/2020/2023/07/26/njoftim-shperblehet-ne-menyre-te-pashembullt-sabotuesi-i-unitetit-te-kishes-orthodhokse-autoqefale-te-shqiperise/>